Amendment to Claims

Please cancel claims 2-3, 11-12, 20, 23 and 28. Please add new claims 29-34. Please amend claims 1, 4-10, 13-19 and 21 as indicated below. Please note a claim 26 was never presented.

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for image processing comprising ~~the steps of~~:

identifying a container region in a first image by evaluating pixels neighboring a seed pixel to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value as said seed pixel; and growing said container region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same color value;

identifying [[and]] an object in a second image ~~to be inserted into the container region~~; determining a placement location for the object within said container region and a scale factor associated therewith; [[and]]

inserting said object into said container region at said placement location using said scale factor to generate a composite image; and

outputting said composite image.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of~~ identifying said object in a second image further comprises ~~the steps of:~~ evaluating pixels in a boundary region to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same ~~similar~~ color value to as a boundary pixel; and growing said boundary region by iteratively identifying pixels having said ~~similar~~ same or substantially same color value.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of~~ determining a placement location within said container region and said scale factor associated with said object further comprises ~~the steps of:~~

determining a scale factor;

determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said scale factor;

if said object will fit into said container region at at least one location, selecting a placement location for said object; and

otherwise, reducing said scale factor and determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said reduced scale factor.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1, further comprising ~~the step of:~~ downsampling said first image prior to identifying said container region

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of~~ selecting said placement location for said object further comprises ~~the steps of:~~ identifying a plurality of feasible placement locations for said object within said container region at said scale factor; and selecting one of said plurality of feasible placement locations as said placement location.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein ~~said step of~~ selecting one of said plurality of feasible placement locations as said placement location further comprises ~~the step of:~~ determining a mean center associated with origin points of said plurality of feasible placement locations; and selecting said mean center as an origin point of said placement location.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of~~ inserting said object into said container region at said placement location using said scale factor further comprises ~~the steps of:~~ determining a boundary associated with a scaled version of said object; storing said boundary and said placement location; and inserting said object into said container region using said stored boundary and placement location.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium ~~containing~~ comprising a software program encoded thereon which when executed by a processor causes the processor to ~~that performs the steps of:~~ perform a method for generating a composite image comprising:

identifying a container region in a first image by evaluating pixels neighboring a seed pixel to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value as said seed pixel; and growing said container region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same color value;

identifying [[and]] an object in a second image ~~to be inserted into the container region~~;

determining a placement location for the object within said container region and a scale factor associated therewith; [[and]]

inserting said object into said container region at said placement location using said scale factor to generate a composite image; and

outputting said composite image.

11. (Cancelled.)

12. (Cancelled.)

13. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, wherein ~~said step of~~ identifying said object in a second image further comprises ~~the steps of:~~ evaluating pixels in a boundary region to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same ~~similar~~ color value to as a boundary pixel; and growing said boundary region by iteratively identifying pixels having said ~~similar~~ same or substantially same color value.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, wherein ~~said step of~~ determining a placement location within said container region and said scale factor associated with said object further comprises ~~the steps of:~~

determining a scale factor;

determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said scale factor;

if said object will fit into said container region at at least one location, selecting a placement location for said object; and

otherwise, reducing said scale factor and determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said reduced scale factor.

15. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 11, further comprising ~~the step of:~~ downsampling said first image prior to identifying said container region

16. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, wherein ~~said step of~~ selecting said placement location for said object further comprises ~~the step of:~~ identifying a plurality of feasible placement locations for said object within said container region at said scale factor; and selecting one of said plurality of feasible placement locations as said placement location.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein ~~said step of~~ selecting one of said plurality of feasible placement locations as said placement location further comprises ~~the step of:~~ determining a mean center associated with origin points of said plurality of feasible placement locations; and selecting said mean center as an origin point of said placement location.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, wherein ~~said step of~~ inserting said object into said container region at said placement location using said scale factor further comprises ~~the steps of:~~ determining a boundary associated with a scaled version of said object; storing said boundary and said placement location; and inserting said object into said container region using said stored boundary and placement location.

19. (Currently Amended) An image processing system comprising:

a processor for inserting an object into a container region by:

identifying said container region by evaluating pixels neighboring a seed pixel to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value as said seed pixel;

growing said container region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same color value;

segmenting said object and said container region;

determining a placement location within said container region for said object and a scale factor associated therewith; and

inserting said object into said container region at said placement location using said scale factor to generate a composite image; and

an output device for outputting said composite image.

20. (Currently Amended).

21. (Currently Amended) The image processing system of claim 19, wherein said processor identifies said object by evaluating pixels in a boundary region to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same ~~similar~~ color value to as a boundary pixel; and growing said boundary region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same ~~similar~~ color value.

22. (Original) The image processing system of claim 19, wherein said processor determines a placement location within said container region and said scale factor associated with said object by: determining a scale factor; determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said scale factor; if said object will fit into said container region at at least one location, selecting a placement location for said object; and otherwise, reducing said scale factor and determining whether said object will fit into said container region at said reduced scale factor.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (Original) The image processing system of claim 19, wherein said processor identifies a plurality of feasible placement locations for said object within said container region at said scale factor; and selects one of said plurality of feasible placement locations as said placement location.

25. (Original) The image processing system of claim 24, wherein said processor determines a mean center associated with origin points of said plurality of feasible placement locations and selects said mean center as an origin point of said placement location.

26. (Never Presented).

27. (Original) The image processing system of claim 19, further comprising: a memory device for storing a boundary associated with a scaled version of said object; wherein said processor inserts said object into said container region using said stored boundary and placement location.

28. (Cancelled).

29. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 4 wherein the second image includes the object and a portion which forms a background to the object and wherein the background portion of the second image and the container region of the first image both have the same or substantially same color associated with them.

30. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein evaluating pixels neighboring a seed pixel to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value as said seed pixel further comprises determining whether a Euclidean distance between a color value of the seed pixel and a color value of the neighboring pixel is within a predetermined threshold distance.

31. (New) A computer implemented method for image processing comprising:

identifying a container region in a first image;

identifying an object in a second image to be inserted into the container region by evaluating pixels in a boundary region to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value to as a boundary pixel; and growing said boundary region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same color value;

inserting said object into said container region to generate a composite image; and

outputting said composite image.

32. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 31 wherein said boundary region surrounds the object and said boundary region starts growing from pixels forming a boundary of the second image and grows inward toward the object in the second image.

33. (New) A computer-readable medium comprising a software program encoded thereon which when executed by a processor causes the processor to perform a method of generating a composite image comprising:

identifying a container region in a first image;

identifying an object in a second image to be inserted into the container region by evaluating pixels in a boundary region to determine if said pixels have a same or substantially same color value to as a boundary pixel; and growing said boundary region by iteratively identifying pixels having said same or substantially same color value;

inserting said object into said container region to generate a composite image; and

outputting said composite image.

34. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein said boundary region surrounds the object and said boundary region starts growing from pixels forming a boundary of the second image and grows inward toward the object in the second image.